



The Datum Point

Newsletter of the
**NORTHERN VIRGINIA CHAPTER OF THE
ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA**

Website – www.nvcasv.org

January 2007

Malcolm “Rich” Richardson **President of Northern Virginia Chapter 1984-85**



Memorial Service:
Monday January 8th at 11:00AM
Everly Funeral Home, 10565 Main St., Fairfax
(703-385-1110)
Reception at 12:00 PM at American Legion Post
177, 3939 Oak St. Fairfax (703-273-2250).

The Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) awarded Rich two special awards:

1991 *Volunteer of the Year*

2004 *Special Award* (along with John Imlay and Dale Brown)
for their outstanding work in preserving and recording
cemeteries inside and outside Virginia.

A NOTE FROM JOHN IMLAY

I first met Malcolm “Rich” Richardson at the Ellanor C. Lawrence Park the early eighties while volunteering for the Fairfax County Archaeology program headed up by Ed Chatelain and Mike Johnson. As part of Ed’s digging crew we had broke for lunch, so I went to the park’s center to use the rest room. Rich was in the center as a volunteer docent. He started asking questions about the archaeology program. He was invited down to see the unit we were excavating. We were at a standstill because our unit was completely covered by a sheet of tin at a depth of about two feet. Rich volunteered to go home, get his torch and cut through the tin so we could

finish the unit. This chance encounter of helping some one in need was the way Rich was.

Since that day in day in the eighties Rich has never stopped helping people when needed. He has worked on numerous archaeology and forensic projects both in the U.S.A. and overseas. He volunteered for many agencies such as the National Park Service and Smithsonian and law enforcement agencies in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Texas.

He has overseen many archaeology projects and has written and assisted in many reports and Occasional Papers such as Earps Ordinary, Oakley, Picnic Site 14, Bellwood Cemetery, Carter Family Cemetery, and the Haley - McCoy Site just to name a few. He was of great assistance in helping me when I needed help. Two that come to mind are the Eleanor Mullen eulogy (an ASV member and volunteer) and the graphics on “Fort No Name.”

Rich was very adept and had many, many talents. They included: lapidary work, woodworking, photography, writing, computer work, cooking, and a great knowledge of history. He was referred to at one time in a report as having a “keen eye and deft hand.”

Many local historians called on him when they needed help in finding a certain piece of history that they were unsure about. If Rich did not know the answer he would spend countless hours in the courthouses for the answers. In a 1993 Washington Post article he was featured as having spent two and one half years and over 5,000 volunteer hours indexing the Fairfax Herald which consisted of more than half - million citations and over 40 million computer keystrokes.

His woodworking talents included making screens for screening artifacts, datum point stakes, and crab mallets for archaeology crab feasts. His metal work talent included my very highly prized “two-handle trowel,” so I would keep both hands and eyes in the ground and not what was happening around me.

Rich worked with Dr. Douglas Owsley of the Smithsonian on many forensic cases and became very adept at using the steel probe to feel subtle differences in the soils compaction and recognizing when it had been disturbed so as to find graves in lost cemeteries and of murdered victims. This knowledge was then passed on to people working in law enforcement, surveyors and others associated with that specialty.

He had a knack for finding old abandoned cemeteries, the number of graves and knowing where their perimeters.

In closing, probably the most respectful thing I witnessed was when Dr. Owsley and his crew excavated 12 burials on the Eastern shore of Maryland near Oxford, in November of 2004. Rich was unable to be there due to health reasons but a chair was set up each day in his honor with his name in the seat of that chair. It was told that if any one there felt that they could fill Rich's shoes they could sit there. Needless to say no one sat there that week, and when the group photo was taken, Rich's chair was there in the middle of the front row with his name on it.

Everything Rich did, he did to help someone else and to pass on his knowledge so the next person could benefit from it. *He embodied what the word volunteer means.* Webster describes the word VOLUNTEER as one who offers himself and or service of his own free will. Rich most assuredly gave both.

Rich will surely be missed by everyone who came to know him and know I will miss him saying "Hurry up Imlay, we don't have all day!"

A NOTE FROM MIKE JOHNSON

Rich started with the Fairfax County Archeological Survey in the early 1980s, volunteering with Ed Chatelain. He rapidly took on more responsibility as he attained greater technical proficiency. Eventually, he rose to become Chapter President in the mid-1980s (1984-85). During his stint as Chapter President, he invigorated the Chapter's publications program, publishing several historic reports.

He helped supervise excavations at Earp's Ordinary in Fairfax City and supervised excavations at the Milan site off West Ox Road near the Ox Hill Civil War Battlefield. These two projects, Earp's and Milan, were among several that were published during or shortly after his terms as President.

Rich's love of archeology took him to many interesting places, where he volunteered for several other organizations. He, John Imlay, Eleanor Mullen and Jackie Cuyler all received commendation awards from the National Park Service for their work at Portici on the National Battlefield near Manassas and the Colonial Plantation, Harmony Hall In Prince Georges County, Maryland.

Eventually, Rich joined Doug Owsley's crew of specialized excavators, working on recovering human remains from historic cemeteries and burial grounds. There, too, Rich rose to the top and became Doug's "right arm." Locally, the six Civil War soldiers at Centreville, New Market in the Shenandoah Valley; the Trinity Catholic Church (D.C.), Mary E. Lee, Ross and Thompson cemeteries, are among the many projects with which Rich helped Doug. His interests also took him out of the country where he helped Doug with mass burials in Bosnia.

He also became the conscience of the Fairfax County Government on treating human burials with proper respect. He would dutifully remind the County of its legal obligations whenever a cemetery became threatened. In this capacity he was able to continue his influence and work after he could no longer go into the field.

All of us who knew him will miss him for both the wonderful friend he was and his substantive contributions to conserving our common cultural heritage.

A NOTE FROM SUZANNE LEVY

Sometime in 1989 Malcolm Richardson walked into the Virginia Room and offered to help us with a local newspaper indexing project. None of the staff is very clear on how that came about, although the late Nan Netherton, a local historian who had been involved in a project to index smaller northern Virginia newspapers was likely the catalyst. What a difference his project has made for researchers in Northern Virginia!

The original idea was to have volunteers index local newspapers at the library. According to an article by Marylou Tousignant in the Washington Post on July 6, 1993:

As Richardson remembers it, "All I was going to do was help them get started" by setting up a computer database for the library. "I remember distinctly saying that I'll set up the program, but I'm not going to do any indexing."

Well, you know what happened next. When volunteer indexers couldn't be found, Richardson, fearing his computer program might never get used, waded in. At first he took notes by hand, then he bought a laptop computer that he lugged to the library four and five times a week while other patrons breathed down his neck as he tied up one of the two microfilm machines.

Eventually, the library's supporters solved that problem by buying a secondhand microfilm machine and installing it in Richardson's home. The library gave Richardson one of its two microfilmed sets of the Herald, and he was off and reading.

Rich indexed 50 years of the Fairfax Herald through 1936 and worked with Pat Gallagher and her husband, Kevin, to get IBM facilities to manipulate and print the database when county computer systems were unable to do so. We were able to bind volumes of vital records along with the historical index. He then indexed several smaller papers that could be completed rather quickly: the Fairfax News/Herndon Observer from 1925-1943, Arlington County Record (1932-33), Fairfax County Independent (1929-1932), Fairfax City Times (1961-68), Fairfax News (1872-75), Local News (1861-62) and the Rambler Columns from the Washington Star (1912-28). When it became apparent how useful this work was he talked a fellow Archeology volunteer, Barbara Welch, into taking on the rest of the Herald through 1973. He also worked with a

group of volunteers at Reston Library who have worked on the Reston Times.

He answered inquiries from librarians and historians around the country who had seen our database and wondered how we did it. He was very happy to share what he had learned. For the past few years as he felt up to it, he worked on the Alexandria Gazette's Civil War years. He had started in 1854 and by the time he got through 1855 he began to be frustrated by the contents. So he skipped along to May of 1860 where the content became more interesting for local historians. About a year ago he turned the disk from his last reel of film which ended in the fall of 1863. He felt so badly that he wasn't up to doing more, but Barbara Welch has picked up where he let off and added two more months to the index.

I can't tell you how many people have benefited from his work. He provided printouts for people on particular subjects for the years before we were able to bring the database online. He took such joy in putting historians, archeologists, county staff and genealogical researchers in touch with information that might have eluded them. But he was a modest man who never wanted to be singled out for his work. He hated it when the library honored him and loved to tell me he would be out of town when I would invite him to a ceremony honoring volunteers. But his accomplishments did not go unrecognized. He received star awards from the Fairfax County Public Library Board, the Board of Supervisors, and the National Association of Counties. His total hours donated to the library were somewhere in the vicinity of 9000 over the years. There were months when he worked more than many full time employees.

In addition to his work on the database he was a great friend of the small cemeteries of Fairfax County. He would get on the county staff if a cemetery was being violated or threatened by development. He would call the police, Commonwealth's Attorney, County Attorney or anyone else who he thought should have been doing more to enforce the laws on the books regarding cemeteries.

He encouraged my staff and me to do more and more and I don't know anyone who devoted so much time in their retirement years to the many causes he was interested in.

I will miss his council and friendship as we all will.

A NOTE FROM PATRICK O'NEILL

As a professional archaeologist and historian, Rich Richardson's contributions to my world are invaluable. His help with indexing the Fairfax area historic newspapers have helped and will continue to help the community learn about their past. Rich was instrumental in re-finding some partially buried historic tombstones in the Ratcliffe Cemetery from a project he worked on with Doug Owsley in the mid-1990s. When I was mapping the cemetery in 2003, Rich came out, even then in ill health, and while leaning against a shovel, gave me directions to where the stones could be found (which later were within feet of where he remembered!). If Rich

knew you were working on a project and he had information to give, he would call you up or come by and share the information with you to help protect the site or to at least augment the site report.

January, 2007 Chapter Meeting

Speaker – Kerri S. Barile

Topic - The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Tavern Life, Urban Slavery, and a Parking Lot in Historic Fredericksburg

In the spring of 2006, archaeologists from Dovetail Cultural Resource Group conducted archival research and archaeological excavations under a parking lot in downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia. Surprisingly, preservation in the area was excellent. When the historic buildings on the site were destroyed to install the parking lot in 1967, the city simply truncated all of the above-ground elements leaving the below-ground remains in place. Among the layered features uncovered at the site were the foundation of an eighteenth century store, the Indian Queen Tavern (c. 1771–1832), and even what is likely a mid-nineteenth century urban slave quarter. This is the first slave quarter ever uncovered in Fredericksburg. This paper will highlight the history of the lot, one of the oldest in town, and discuss the results of the archaeological excavations. Not only did the work successfully reveal a great deal about the heritage of Fredericksburg, but it spawned movement among the City Council to examine the place of archaeological investigations within city legislation.

From the President

The elections held at the December meeting have given you some new officers, and now the NVC board looks as such: President – Patrick O'Neill, Vice-President – Ann Wood, Treasurer – C.K. Gailey, Corresponding Secretary – Vicki Monken, Recording Secretary and Editor – Diane Schug-O'Neill. C.K. Gailey stepped down as Vice-President after five years, making him one of the longest serving officers in one position for the chapter. George Monken "retired" from Treasurer, and then oddly went on a trip! Many thanks also go to Tom Boltz, retiring editor, who did a great job with the newsletter. We look forward to serving you during the upcoming year!

Fairfax County Volunteer Opportunities

Lab Hours:

Tuesdays	9am – 9pm	Prehistoric
Fridays	9am – 2:30pm	Historic
Saturdays	9am – 2:30pm	Both

Other days require appointment (call 703-534-3881)

NVC/ASV CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Patrick O'Neill	patrickoneill@erols.com 703-244-6275 (cell)
Vice President	Anne Wood	annpwood@comcast.net
Treasurer	C.K. Gailey	treas@nvcasv.org
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Recording Secretary	Diane Schug-'ONeill	schugoneill@erols.com
Editor	Diane Schug-'ONeill	schugoneill@erols.com

Fairfax County Archaeologists (FCPA)

Chapter Sponsors **call 703-534-3881**

Elizabeth Crowell	elizabeth.crowell@fairfaxcounty.gov
Mike Johnson	Richard Sacchi
Bob Wharton	John Rutherford

Public Archaeological Programs in N. Va.

Mount Vernon	Esther White	ewhite@mountvernon.org
Gunston Hall	Dave Shonyo	archaeology@gunstonhall.org or call 703-550-0441
Alexandria Museum	Pam Cressey	703-838-4399 (information)
Pr. William County Archaeologist	Justin Patton	703-792-5729

NVC/ASV MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Phone (H): _____

(W): _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

Individual (\$15) _____

Student (\$5) _____

Family (\$17) _____

New _____

Renewal _____

Return to:

NVC/Archeological Society of Virginia

2855 Annandale Rd.

Falls Church, VA 22042

Chapter members are encouraged to join our parent organization, the Archeological Society of Virginia.

The Chapter meets at 7:30p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at the James Lee Center at the above address.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!!!

The Datum Point

Northern Virginia Chapter
Archeological Society of Virginia
2855 Annandale Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED